



## **Performance Art + non knowledge Hester Reeve: On the Good**

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# On the Good

Hester Reeve

## Preface:

Hester Reeve has carried out a series of works that use live art action in order to generate an ad-lib lecture-performance. These pieces are always site-specific and either to no one or a small number of committed enthusiasts due to their location and timing. The actions result in idiosyncratic declarations of an 'imaginative knowing' that is responsive to the site that the action takes place in.

'On the Good,' a title taken from the only public lecture that the ancient Greek philosopher Plato gave, was performed at dawn at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park on August 30<sup>th</sup> 2014 as part of Reeve's 2-year project, *Ymedaca*. Predicated on a re-appraisal of the relevance of Plato's 'living philosophy' and his notions of 'the good,' *Ymedaca* examined the human capacity for passionate knowledge and the capacity for wonder. The artist used a steel megaphone to boom her words out across the landscape. She also carried a portable thunder sheet which was used to punctuate her speech.

What follows is a transcript of the recording made of the performance-lecture which was addressed to the sculptures across the country park\*. Reeve believes that, unlike standard forms of knowledge, knowledge produced via live art action hangs momentarily in the air, its real solidity is in the anchor developing in the very bones of the human artist. For the audience, the artist is a figure of thought, a call to their ability to know otherwise for themselves.

\* \* \*

# On the Good

Hester Reeve, 6am August 30<sup>th</sup> 2014

Sculptures of the world, I greet you in the name of the Good, the Good that cannot be communicated! But I greet your sculptural substance, here where you stand singularly as rocks in the path and passageway to beauty. We may come in the daylight hours and look at the appearance of your visual structures but I know that what is true to you and your agency is the matter of truth and the way you stand in contact and relationship to the Good.

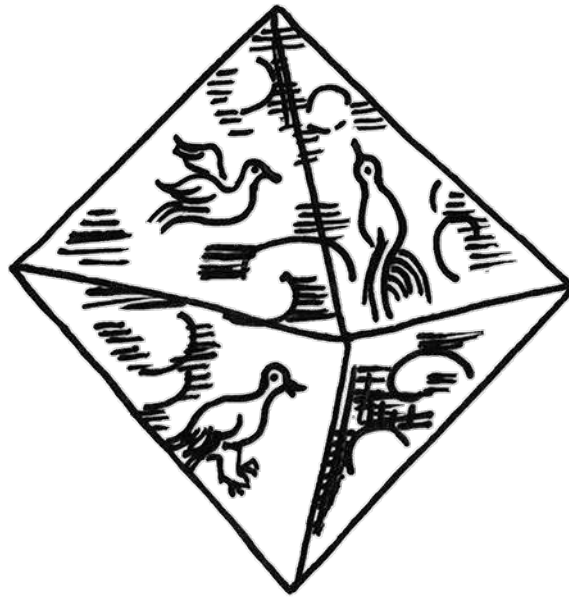


Sculptures of the world, I see sparkling! I see it every where, I see it all around you. I see the sparkling of the Good! Here before you is the artist but this is not me, this is not Hester, this is also a sculptural substance. It is not exclusive, I do not own it. I would not have the substance of artist if there were not also the possibility of sculpture, of sparkling. This *gathering of sculptures* is the only university that I care to teach in. This is the only university that may hope to touch the Good, the Good which is untouchable and yet somehow, sculptures of the world, you stand like rocks in the path of beauty that lights its way.

## *Lightening flash*

Sculptures of the world, I see sparkling! The sparkling of the Good is emanating in molecules all over this land. As I allow the molecules to enter my body, my own molecules begin sculpting in the shape of Platonic solids. I do not know this. But nonetheless, in response to the sparkling, my molecules sculpt in the shape of Platonic solids. I am not the substance I thought I was.

## *Lightening flash*



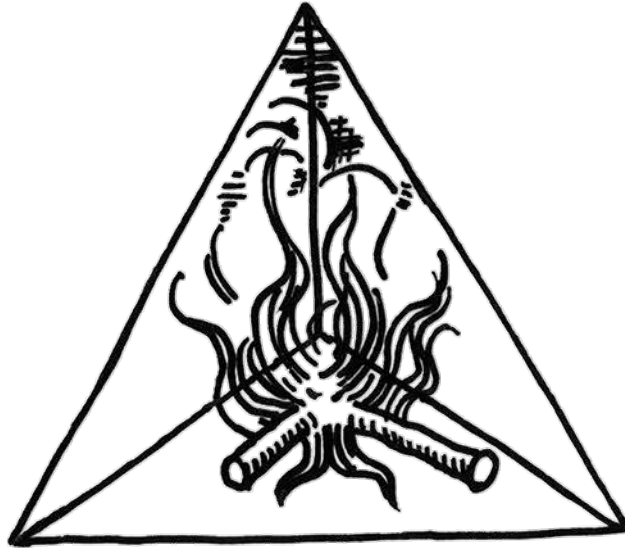
Sculptures of the world, I see sparkling! What is the Good? You may be able to reach for the Good but you cannot show me the Good. I cannot know the Good. And yet the Good is the Good. The Good is the ultimate conceptual sculpture. Plato, inspiration for Ymedaca today, banished the artist from his philosophical state. He said artists' work was shadows, he said artists have no connection to the Good and all humans must work for the Good.



Sculptures of the world, I see sparkling! I am the artist-substance, I work for the Good. I do not know what the Good is. Today the artist declares that they work towards the Good, that all human substance is artistic and works towards the Good. Humans of the world, put on your sculpture blankets...Humans of the world, I see sparkling! Plato was an artist. Plato, descendant of Socrates. Socrates claimed he was descended from Daedalus, a difficult sculptor. Sculptor of the great Xoana. The Xoana sculptures of

ancient Greece – so inspired by their wild frenzy with the Good that Daedalus had to chain them to the ground otherwise they would walk away and leave human society.

### *Lightening flash*

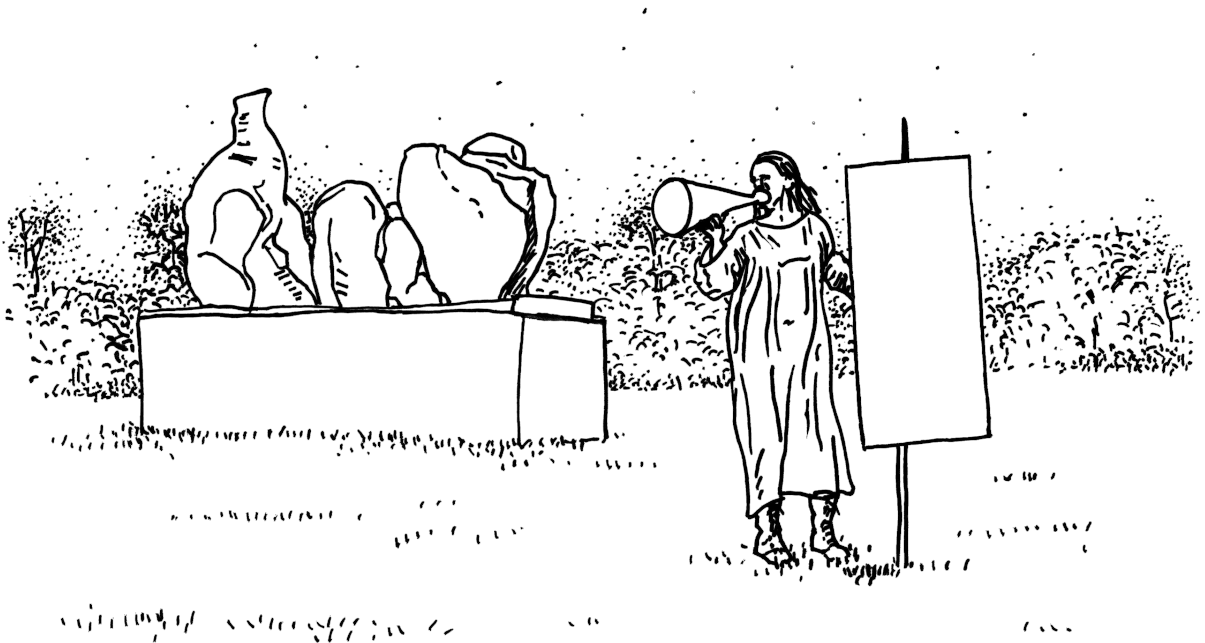


Sculptures of the world, I see sparkling! Do not leave us! Do not walk away! Stay as rocks in the path of beauty. Today, here at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, I give you an adventure. The adventure of the sculpture! You sculptures of bronze, wood, plastic, and human thinking, you will be joined by the seven guardians of *Ymedaca*. Seven singular sculptural substances. Human beings working invisibly. Unlike artists, they sculpt invisibly in the world making meaning in their lives and bringing joy to their own souls. Via this craft they change the sculptural substance of their inner being and as such they sparkle. Today they come with liberalational manoeuvres for all the visitors in order to join you in this unique sculptural landscape.



Sculptures of the world, I see sparkling! This is a protest. This is a protest for the joy of the soul in the University of Life! The University of Life formed from sculptural substance always reaching for the Good and always and forever never finding out what it is.

*(Thunder = Applause)*



Drawings based on Johannes Kepler's diagrams of Platonic solids & Jonty Wilde's photographic documentation of performance

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